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January 18, 1990

RF-90-0256

David P. Simonson

Manager

DOE, RFO

Ref: D. P. Simonson ltr to B. P. Warner, Request For Information From General Accounting Office, January 12, 1990

The following narrative and attachments are submitted to answer the above referenced request. The responses are provided in the same numerical order as the request.

 Background information on the pondcrete problem is found in the attached Unusual Occurrence Report (UOR RFP #88-7-788 88-1, Enclosure: 1). In addition to be causes shown in the UOR, the problem was exacerbated by the outdoor storage of the pondcrete while the disposal facility was being permitted for mixed waste. As noted, the problem was multi-faceted and involved several disciplines. Also noted in the UOR, the deformed boxes were discovered on May 23, 1988 by the Operations foremen.

The stored pondcrete inventory requires repackaging into plywood boxes, even if some of the waste forms had not destablized. The triwalls containers had deteriorated and the criteria for package acceptance at NTS was also revised to require 4000 pounds per square foot compressive strength. The additional cost, therefore, covers the increased labor, materials and facilities for the remixing operation. Furthermore, in order to meet new RCRA regulations for land disposal restrictions by May 8, 1990, three additional remix facilities are being implemented.

2. The cost to correct the pondcrete problem is budgeted at \$15.9M for FY90. The original FY90 budget prior to the accelerated efforts was \$14.6M, which leaves a total additional cost of \$1.3M. This budget includes all personnel and equipment necessary for repackaging and remixing all of the pondcrete triwalls on the pads.

If all of the pondcrete triwalls had originally been properly mixed (not require remixing), they would still require repackaging. Approximately \$1M could be saved from the above budget if the pondcrete problem had not occurred.

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The actual number of pondcrete blocks (triwalls) involved is 13,276 (as of January 7, 1990). It has been estimated that 6976 triwalls will need to be repackaged and 6310 triwalls will require remixing.

3. The current status of the pondcrete problem is as follows:

Currently none of the estimated 6310 pondcrete triwalls requiring remixing have been processed. An enclosure for the mixing facility located outside of Building 788 has been designed and should be constructed by January 30, 1990. Three additional remixing facilities have been designed and will be located inside of heated tension membrane structures being erected on the pads. These facilities will be ready for operation the later part of January.

Approximately 126 people have been hired to date to operate the remixing and repackaging facilities.

- 4. Pondcrete is being stored at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) in what is referred to as interim retrievable storage, in compliance with the NTS interim RCRA permit. The final RCRA permit will specify the permanent disposal configuration. A likely option will be to leave the waste in place with additional earth over, or the waste may have to be relocated to another storage pit at the NTS.
- 5. The December 13, 1988 letter to Mr Twining is enclosed (Enclosure: 2).
- 6. The July 1986 DOE/EPA compliance agreement is enclosed (Enclosure: 3).
- 7. No other documents were deemed germane.
- 8. Point of contact for further questions is R. V. Bynum, Process Technology Development, Building 371, FTS 320-7100.

R. V. Bynum, Manager

Process Technology Development

RVB: akb

Enclosures: As Stated

Orig. and 1 cc - D. P. Simonson